



News Release

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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Children of Women Inmates Attending Free Summer Camp At Episcopal Retreat in Frederick County

TOWSON, MD (July 11, 2006)---Nineteen children whose mothers are incarcerated are spending a week at a beautiful rural summer camp thanks to the generosity of Maryland Episcopalians.

The children, ranging in age from eight to 12, have mothers who are incarcerated at either the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women or the Baltimore Pre-Release Unit for Women. They are the first children of inmates in Maryland to participate in this camp, the cost of which has been paid by Episcopal churches throughout the state.

Camp Amazing Grace operates out of the Bishop Claggett Center, a sprawling hilltop retreat just south of Buckeystown in Frederick County. Much of what the campers experience---from the wildlife and insects to the camp programs themselves, to the Blue Ridge vistas in the distance, the corn in the fields and the train whistles echoing through the valley---is brand new for most of the children, who largely reside in urban areas.

The idea of a free summer camp for children of incarcerated parents began 12 years ago in Indiana, when the Rev. Jacqueline A. Means was chaplain at a women's prison. Reverend Means is now the Criminal Justice Officer for the Episcopal Church, concentrating on prison ministry and outreach efforts. She is overseeing the Frederick County camp this week.

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Through this Friday, the kids will be swimming, climbing, hiking, learning arts and crafts, and enjoying everything from frogs to music, plays to magicians. Warden Brenda Shell, the chief executive of both the women's prison and pre-release center, says that the children's artwork will be displayed at the women's correctional facilities for their mothers to enjoy.

Under the leadership of Commissioner Frank C. Sizer, Jr., the Maryland Division of Correction is implementing change, increasing community partnerships, and beginning innovative programs while maintaining public safety. "This is exactly the kind of community involvement that we need to help us break the cycle of kids whose parents are incarcerated eventually ending up in prison," says the Commissioner.

"This is a wonderful partnership and a generous offer from the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland," says Mary Ann Saar, Secretary of Maryland Public Safety and Correctional Services. "Every child should be able to experience summer camp, especially those who don't have the benefit of having their mothers around to love and nurture them."

The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland and the Division of Correction hope to have another camp next summer---and increase the number of children who can attend.

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